



## **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN ALEXANDRIA 2020 STUDY**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **1. What are Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)?**

ADUs, commonly referred to as “in-law apartments” or “granny flats” are secondary, independent living units with a separate kitchen, sleeping area and bathroom. ADUs can assume different forms, for example as basement apartments, converted garages, or new smaller dwelling units detached from a primary residence.

#### **2. Why is the City developing an ADU policy?**

An ADU policy will help expand housing options, affordability and accessibility in neighborhoods of opportunity in the city. The Beauregard and Potomac Yard Small Area Plan call for allowing ADUs, and some Potomac Yard homes were built with accessory guest houses that could be converted to ADUs.

#### **3. How will ADUs impact housing affordability in Alexandria?**

ADUs have the potential to expand housing supply and choice in the City. ADUs are smaller and have fewer amenities than traditional rental housing options, which increases the likelihood that they would expand housing affordability. ADUs may also help homeowners, including first-time buyers, families with children who need care from a live-in provider, as well as long-time residents, including elderly, remain in Alexandria more affordably.

#### **4. How can ADUs facilitate aging in place?**

ADUs can enable seniors and persons with disabilities to age safely, comfortably and more affordably in place by providing on-site housing for caregivers.

#### **5. How can ADUs support homeownership and wealth building?**

ADUs allow homeowners to generate new rental income to more comfortably afford their primary residence and increase the value of their property, which creates additional equity.

## **6. Where will ADUs be allowed?**

In consultation with the [Urban Institute](#), the City is undertaking a review of ADU policies in our region and nationally to see what models and practices might work in Alexandria. Community engagement will be an important feature of the review. Community engagement, including a survey and public meetings to explain ADUs, how they work, and solicit feedback, will be launched mid-March. This process is anticipated to shape where ADUs are allowed.

## **7. Will the City establish design guidelines and regulations to determine where ADUs can be located on a site and what they can look like?**

Yes, as part of the ongoing review process, and future community engagement, guidelines will be developed, including consideration for size, scale, placement and parking.

## **8. Why should I participate in this process?**

We need your input to help develop a policy that adds the flexibility needed to create additional housing while limiting impacts on surrounding neighbors.

## **9. How can I participate in this process?**

You can stay informed about the project by subscribing to [enews](#) and following us on [twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Engagement opportunities will be posted on the project website and through these avenues. Community input gathered throughout the process will inform staff's policy recommendations that will be considered by Planning Commission and City Council.

## **10. Do any of our neighboring jurisdictions have an ADU policy?**

Yes, many jurisdictions in the Washington, D.C. metro region have developed ADU policies, including [Washington, D.C.](#); [Arlington, VA](#); and [Montgomery County, MD](#). In addition, ADU policies from other jurisdictions across the country are discussed in the second online presentation available on the project website.

## **11. Do ADUs have to comply with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code?**

Yes, ADUs must comply with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. The Department of Code Administration can issue violation notices if they do not.